776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

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1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyẽ ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

776 857 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
824 tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
● 857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
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194 857 772 (space, elements). Each of the six dyo to which men are initiated after their circumcision corresponds to a ritual object in the Ndomo: the Komo (west and air) is represented by the dyara (rhombus); the Kworé (east and water) by the tori; the Nama (south and fire) by the wulu; the Kono (north and earth) by the instrument of the same name. The Jineble corresponds to the Nya (nadir) and Nago (zenith). These last two institutions are linked with the whirlwind movement of the creative seed, symbolized by the fonio seed. That is to say, membership in the children's Ndomo society constitutes a pre-initiation to the adult societies which are essentially cosmogonic. The sanctuaries and the sacred fields of the first four dyo are theoretically situated at the corresponding cardinal point. The operation of the societies according to a strict system confirms the observations and hypotheses presented on page 10.

Moreover, the mask of the Ndomo represents both Mousso Koroni and the eight seeds stolen from Pemba. All the ceremonies concerning the coming out of Bambara masks (those of the dyo as well as those of the Ciwara and the sogo) recall the theft and cultivation of nourishing seeds by Mousso Koroni and their recapture by the animals on Faro's behalf. Similar representations are observed among the Dogon concerning the yurugu, yasigi, and Nommo.

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Furthermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

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being born; bolo-ko literally means "affair involving birth."

etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the soli. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

• 857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

881 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the soli, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.
794 Observance of the soli, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the soli within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

881 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute
794 necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched
561 economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an im-
571 portant occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

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imposed and since there may be as much as six or seven years' difference in age between the oldest and youngest children participating in the same soli, it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

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a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

admitted to a brotherhood unless he is soli-ma, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the soli.

n-Tomo

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The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for the soli, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years

3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the soli, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as n-golo-moso-u by the n-Tomo-den'-u.

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called n-Tomo-den'; the eldest is the leader or n-Tomo-tigi, and he is assisted by a syere or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

561 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo
• 857 after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

881 The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual
793 patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector.

1. The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.

It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which enables him to punish any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

857 292 [782] The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacrifices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and costume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets represents a man and the other a woman, and [831] their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 857 [534] A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the [195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every
796 year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also

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1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
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857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 796 [572] companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

857 796 785 The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a

> 1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

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considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 857 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the ceremonies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different ton.

The little girl (ton-musso) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (tontié); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her tontié must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her tontié is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the n'Tomo (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the n'tomo-tigi and to his deputy, the n'tomo-tigi-syere. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 796 The different ceremonies of the n'Tomo, which take place each year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit,

2. Tauxier, La religion bambara [The Bambara Religion].

a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same n'tomoya and who have undergone the soli together are united for life. They are fulani, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
286 caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
285 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

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Men	Women	Children	All
Smoking of the meat	Harvest of karite and its preparation	Harvest	
Slaughtering the animals (work reserved for smiths)			
	Construction of the hut		
Masonry	Drawing and carrying necessary water	Carrying water (girls)	
Cutting and carrying straw and bamboo		Carrying straw (boys)	
Roofing			
Plastering exterior	Plastering interior	Pounding the threshing floor	
[65]	Hunting		
Preparation of the powder		Beating for game with dogs (boys)	
Hunting			
Training dogs			
	Fishing		
Preparation of fish traps and nets	Spinning	Fishing in ponds with bell-shaped traps	In case of draining a pond

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Men	Women	Children	All
	Care of the animals		
	Care and milking of cows	Helping (girls)	
	Farming		
Removing stumps			
Sowing	Sowing sometimes	Sowing sometimes	Generally speaking, all cooperate in working the land, which is the only noble work, for the Bambara is above all a farmer and maker of sacrifices.
Weeding	Weeding sometimes	Weeding sometimes	
Threshing the millet (fla-ké)			
Harvest of millet and fonio	Weeding of fonio	Helping	
Threshing millet			
Grubbing the peanuts	Gathering and husking		
Harvesting maize	Picking ears	Helping	
Threshing rice	Harvesting rice	Helping	
Planting sweet potatoes	Transplanting and harvesting	Helping	
Planting kidney beans	Harvesting kidney beans and peas	Helping	

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Men	Women	Children	All
Planting and harvesting manioc			
Profits from okra, da, and indigo go to the men	Okra; cultivation and harvesting	Helping	
	Da: id.	Helping	
	Indigo: id.	Helping	
Preparation of cotton lougan	Harvesting, picking out, spinning cotton	Helping	
Weaving, sewing, putting together	Sale, dyeing	Helping	
Preparation of tobacco lougan, preparation and sale	Watering, powdering, and retail sale of snuff	Helping	
Preparation of calabash lougan, harvesting, emtying, sale, and decoration		Gathering burgu for horses	
	Wells		
[463] Drilling by male smiths only	Drawing water	Helping (girls)	

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	**Circumcision and excision**		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and Dio reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives		
	All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	**Rubber**		
[857] Sale			Gathering and preparation

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, or-
561 ganize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this

[778]

Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the
● 85 mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them to-
●857 gether work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo
776 and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii.
778 These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a

[342]

2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

782 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just
857 about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. Gnéna of the Third Group; The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers;
782 saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The
796 public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

881 304 defended their gods with spear in hand, and I can find in their circumcision nothing which resembles the religion of the Prophet in the slightest. For the Bambara, circumcision is not only the seal of the tribe, it is also a second birth, the entrance into civil and religious life.

It is the occasion for four great festivals. On the second day of the festival which corresponds to the Moslem festival of the كبش (sheep), those about to be circumcised, who are given the special name of soli, offer to the to-n-déou, or members of the mutual aid society, fla-n-ton, a very fine couscous called basi. To obtain it, they have had to go begging and singing from door to door (kili), whence the name soli kili basi, which is given to this festival. Before going under the knife, all the soli make a vigil of arms. The soli kili basi is followed by the soli si (1), and six days later the da woro

1. Si, "spend the night."

is held. When the circumcised boys and excised girls are healed, the drums roll again, /176/ more drinking bouts are organized, and the boloko déou don bo, the coming out of the circumcised, takes place (1).

1. From boli, "hand," "arm" (veiled terms designating the sex organs); ko, "wash"; déou, plural of de, "child," "son"; don, "day"; bo, "to come out."

881 • 857 During the days between the festival of Ramadan (2) and the

2. Under Moslem domination, the Bambara had to observe the festivals of Ramadan and of the كبش (sheep). They have become national festivals with sacrifices to the shades of ancestors and to the good fetishes. The observances do not include a single Moslem rite . . . .

881 festival of the sheep كَمَش , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[533] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering
words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are
soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must
offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we
want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without
a penny."

881 The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their
younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
857 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of
481 close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young
people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed
fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the
soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles
gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration,
basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is
eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run
from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They
do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to
perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the
soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible,
and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch
/177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy,
the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums
split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils,
and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their
tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries
away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears
her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other
things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,